

Lexington's Commemorative Tree Fund

Would you like to honor a family member, favorite teacher, or stalwart town volunteer? What about just doing a good deed -- no, a GREAT deed -- for our environment? The Town of Lexington, through its Tree Committee, has just the thing for you.

Early in the summer the Tree Committee launched a commemorative and memorial tree donation program with an explanatory brochure (available at Town Hall, the DPW, and the Library). The Tree Program will be carried out the same way the gift bench program has been so successfully implemented, in that its aim is to encourage private citizens or businesses to underwrite something for the public good for Lexington's streets and parks.

A tree could be funded by an individual, a family, or a group at work or from church. It could be a celebration for any occasion such as an anniversary, a graduation, birth, or wedding. Very often it is in remembrance of a special person in your life.

The Town will maintain a Gift Tree Album in the Cary Library. Each donor will be given a page to fill with whatever they wish – pictures of the person honored, facts of his or her life, a baby picture and the date of birth of a new family member, and so forth. It would be a lovely commemorative gift for grandparents to make upon the birth of a baby, and the child could visit “his tree” or “her tree” life-long. The tree will also be marked with an arboretum-style tag on the tree's trunk, naming the person honored and giving other information.

The donors can consider the interests and hobbies of the person being honored, and choose a commensurate tree. For instance, an oak is often taken to represent longevity. If the person is/was a bird-lover, fruit, nut or berry trees will attract birds to the area. Or if the person's favorite season is spring, plant an amelanchier (Serviceberry) or Flowering Cherry for their blossoms.

Not every species of tree can be planted on main streets, as the narrow planting strips are forbidding to all except the super-tough. Nevertheless, this is where a shade tree has the greatest impact and benefit. If you prefer a more delicate tree, there is space in our parks, schools, and cemeteries, and on the quieter by-ways of Town.

As you may know, there is a pressing need for tree planting in Lexington. In the last ten years, 600 more trees were removed than planted, and there have appeared many hot spots that cry out for more shade. As a side note, the PTSA Landscaping Subcommittee at Lexington High School has held fund raisers and applied for grants in the last three years in order to plant nearly 30 trees on the largely denuded high school campus. Bravo! Further congratulations are due to the owners of the Walgreen's Pharmacy property on Bedford Street. They recently tore up their large unshaded expanse of parking asphalt and added islands with trees, shrubs and lighting, as well as an edge planting.

What has Lexington planted this year? The Town DPW and volunteers planted 18 trees along the bikeway last June, the results of a state ReLeaf grant, and will plant about 13 or 14 more this fall, thanks to a grant from NSTAR electric utility. There is a small line item in the Town DPW budget to plant an additional ten trees. These 42 trees represent a third of the **124** trees we should have planted, just to replace trees removed in 2004.

Planting a street tree is a small blow against global warming. Trees lower temperatures and the need for mechanical air-conditioning. They pump out tons of oxygen, and remove further tons of carbon dioxide. They ameliorate storm water run-off, and even help extend the life of the asphalt streets by shading them.

The donation for a commemorative tree is a one-time payment of \$1500, covering life-long maintenance, replacement at no additional cost if the tree fails, and registration and tagging. Please note that the gift benches are now nearly the same price -- \$1495.

You may also make a donation of any amount to the Selectmen's Tree Gift Fund, and trees will be planted as the money accumulates. A donation is tax deductible to extent provided under the law.

As the saying goes, "The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago, and the second best time is right now". Please pick up a brochure or call the Town Tree Warden, David Pinsonneault, at 781-861-2758 to ask for more information. Get together with the people in your office, and give a lasting gift to someone who is retiring. Welcome a new baby with a tree that will live a long life alongside that new person. Remember a deceased family member with a memorial that will give shade and comfort to all who pass. Let's plant trees, Lexington!

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Lexington Tree Committee